

# CHRISTIAN KID DETECTIVES



# HAZARDOUS HOLIDAY



# CHRISTIAN KID DETECTIVES.

## HAZARDOUS HOLIDAY.

God seems to have given some clues to Julie, Jason and Luke. Does that mean He has an assignment for them? People need His help. Their only choice is to follow the clues, asking Him to help them succeed in coming to the aid of those He wants to deliver...read on..

This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

CHRISTIAN KID DETECTIVES - HAZARDOUS HOLIDAY

**First edition. June 6, 2019.**

Copyright © 2019 Ross Thompson.

Written by Ross Thompson.

# Table of Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright Page](#)

[PART ONE](#)

[PART TWO](#)

About the Author



## PART ONE

“It’s the only explanation. God has given us some clues for something He wants us to do.” The speaker was Jason Betelli. He was at the house of his close friend Luke Mills. The boys spent most of their spare time at one or the others house. Jason’s conclusion referred to their discovery both he and Luke had unusual dreams the night before. The details of both dreams had a remarkable similarity.

Luke had casually mentioned he’d had an out of the ordinary dream.

“What was it about?” Jason asked.

“A boy, younger than us, named Billy. He was standing in front of a high brick wall. I could just see the roof of a house over the wall. He was wearing...

“A red hoodie, blue Jeans and new Nike sneakers,” Jason cut in, and you woke up feeling the dream was important”

“Yeah,” said Luke surprised.

“In my dream he was on a train looking sad and frightened.” Jason was grinning.

“Awesome,” Luke said.

Now he was thinking about Jason’s reason for the dreams. “How can we be sure it’s God. Does He speak to kids like us?”

“Well for a start Samuel the Prophet was a small boy, much smaller than us, when God first spoke to him,” Jason replied. “It seems more than a coincidence to me that we have both had a dream on the same night about a boy named Billy and in both dreams he was wearing the same clothes. We both remember every detail of the dream, and we both feel the dream is important. We’ve got the backing of the Bible. It’s full of God speaking to people through dreams. Some of the most important events in the Bible started with dreams from God. Even Jesus was protected as a child by instructions from God to Joseph, in dreams.”

Luke couldn’t argue with that load of information.

Luke’s phone on his bed beeped the alert for a text message. Luke walked over and picked it up. “Julie wants us to meet her at McDonalds at 1.30 pm.” The boys and Julie Kostas had become friends when they had helped her, and her mother recover the Vienna vase that had vanished from their house.

“Excellent, said Jason, we meet, and we eat.



JULIE WAVED AS THEY walked in. She had a table with room for the three of them.

“I always forget how long the queues get at McDonalds on the school holidays,” Luke said when they finally sat down.

“That took an age!” Jason groaned.

They attacked the food. After a time, Luke managed to stop chewing for a few seconds to ask, “What’s this about Julie?”

Julie’s face reddened – they could see she was a little nervous. “This might sound weird to you guys - I had a dream...”

“So, did we!” spouted out Luke and Jason together.

“Did you? - Really!” Julie responded, eyes wide with surprise.

“Tell us yours first, then we’ll tell ours,” Jason said.

Breathing a secret sigh of relief – she had half expected the boys might laugh at her – Julie continued, “It wasn’t a long dream. I saw our railway station and a big sign with a lot of light coming from it. The sign said, ‘Monday 2pm - don’t be late’. That was it. I woke up feeling it was from God and important.”

“The train and the station link my dream and Julies together,” Jason said after he and Luke had shared their dreams. “Maybe we are supposed to meet this boy Billy when he gets off the train on Monday.” “I can’t see how your dream fits in Luke.”

“It’s a mystery to me,” said Luke. “The link with yours is Billy. I guess I’ll find out eventually.”

“Let’s pray about it anyway,” Luke said. They bowed their heads and Luke said, “Father God we believe you have given us these dreams because you want us to do something. We ask you to help us follow your clues and to succeed in doing all you want us to do, in Jesus name, amen.

The next day was Sunday. They went to Church with their families but didn’t mention their dreams. They had decided they would make sure they got to the Railway Station on time on Monday and see what happened.



JULIE LOOKED AT HER watch. She was early – 1.50 pm. Luke and Jason made it on the dot of two. Jason turned up puffing and perspiring. The appointment at the station started him thinking about bullet trains. His Google search uncovered a heap of fascinating facts on bullet trains around the world. Soon he was captivated by information about speeds, engineering, shape and the rails they travel on. A link took him to more details about the trains of the future. It was only when he read something about all trains fast or slow needing to be on



schedule that he leaped up. He was late! He pulled out his phone and checked the time - he would just make it if he ran most of the way.

They hadn't thought about the station having four platforms. Platforms three and four were on their side of the station with platforms one and two over a high walk bridge on the other side. How would they keep a watch on all the platforms? Julie came up with the solution. "Hey, I know, if we go up on to the bridge we'll see all of the platforms."

After a few minutes of scanning the platforms Julie pointed, "there!" The boys followed her outstretched arm. On platform one a boy, a little younger than them, was standing, looking around, obviously undecided on what to do. He had on a red hoodie, blue Jeans and what looked like brand-new Nike sneakers. Julie, Luke and Jason crossed the bridge, made their way down the stairs and walked up to the boy.

"Hullo Billy, Julie said, we've come to meet you."

"How do you know my name?"

"The person who sent us to meet you told us your name and what you would be wearing," replied Luke.

"What person?"

Jason put his hand on Billy's shoulder. "It's a complicated story. You must be hungry. We'll get something to eat and tell you about it."

Billy sat all agog, hardly moving a muscle, all ears, as Luke, Jason and Julie described their dreams. After nearly starving to death waiting in line at McDonalds on Saturday, they had changed to a small pizza shop in the town centre. It offered single pizza slices if you didn't want a whole pizza and they had thick-shakes. By combining their money, they had enough to get Billy a pizza and thick-shake, and a slice each for themselves.

"I don't really believe in God, he said, but I did ask him to help me on the train. I've been really missing my Dad and just decided to run away. I don't know why I did it really. I live about a hundred miles down the line from here. My Dad is an Investigation Officer with the Government Customs Department. He often has to go undercover to track down smuggling gangs. He doesn't tell me much about it, but I know It's dangerous work sometimes. Usually he is away about a week undercover. My Mum died when I was a baby. Dad pays a lady to stay at the house with me. She cooks and helps me get to school during those times. The last time though, my Dad didn't come home and after a month I had to go and live with my Aunt and Uncle in their house. The Customs Department have not been able to uncover any clues about his disappearance so far."



“You were putting yourself in danger being alone in a strange place with no one to help you,” Jason said. “Your Dad would not be happy about that.” Billy nodded. “What we should do now is take you to the Police station. Your Aunt and Uncle will have reported you as missing and the Police will have a record of it. I’m sure they will organise for you to get home safely.” Billy reluctantly agreed and off they went.

Billy hadn’t expected to be back on the train so soon. The Police did have him listed as a missing person. His Aunt and Uncle were relieved to receive the phone call saying he was OK. He had Luke, Julie and Jason’s phone numbers and they had his. Now he was on the train in the company of a friendly lady who may have been a Police Woman, Billy wasn’t sure. They talked about all sorts of things during the trip. Once Billy was safely in the custody of his Aunt and Uncle, the lady went to the Station café for a coffee, to read her book, and wait for the next train back.



## PART TWO

On Tuesday evening Jason's Mum and Dad received a phone call from Billy's Aunt. They were grateful for what Julie, Luke and Jason had done for Billy and would the three of them like to come and stay for a week in the cottage behind their house? They lived close to the sea and were sure they would all have a good time, and Billy would be encouraged to have some friends around? Of course the three thought that was a great idea. Nothing like getting away to somewhere you had not seen before. They were excited.

Needing a sunhat was the perfect excuse for Julie to convince her mum to buy the trucker cap with the floral design she had been wanting for a while. She put in a request for new cool sunglasses as well. For Luke it was the perfect time to wear his Black Ace wrap-around sun glasses with the smoke black lenses and dark blue polycarbonate frames. His skateboard was an absolute necessity, as were some of his favourites from his stockpile of skateboard magazines. Jason said he would be taking his Dads old army binoculars from a box in the garage. When asked why, he replied he hoped to spend some time each day scanning the horizon for Chinese submarines spying on our coast. Of course, he would wear his favourite t-shirt, the one that said, 'God does not hate you.'

The train trip to the coast on Thursday took two and a half hours. They pulled in at three in the afternoon.

Billy and his Aunt and Uncle met them at the station. Everybody introduced themselves. After lots of smiles, handshakes, 'hello's,' 'how are you's' and 'nice to meet you's,' - Julie, Jason and Luke, backpacks on their laps, were squeezed together in the back seat of a Range Rover for the short ride to the house.

A straight narrow concrete path lead from the back door of the house to the front door of the cottage. It was small with two bedrooms, a small bathroom and shower, and a living room with kitchen area. The great thing was they could see the beach from the cottage. The sights, sound and smells of a beach holiday were all around them. Waves crashing on the sand, seagulls squawking, the fresh salt air, the smell of seaweed, the hot sun, families camped under big sun umbrellas and small children splashing and paddling in the shallow water

. Julie had one room to herself. Luke and Jason shared a double bunk in the other room. Jason could see Luke wanted the top bunk. That was perfectly fine with Jason. He preferred to sleep a little closer to the ground. Billy slept in his own room in the house. His Aunt had prepared something to eat. Then after a

wander on the beach they watched some television and fell into bed around 11pm.



JASON WENT FROM SOUND asleep to wide awake in two seconds. What was the noise? Knocking? On the front door of the cottage. There wasn't much light, so it was early. He groaned. Oh no! this was a holiday. You weren't supposed to get up early on a holiday. You slept in and got up whenever. That was Jason's idea of a holiday anyway. He pulled the blankets over his head and hoped the knocking would stop. It didn't. After a while he sat up, got out of bed and stumbled to the door. It was Billy, his face alive with excitement. "Jason, I got a text from my dad!! That helped Jason to wake up. "Come in, he said, I'll wake the others."

He didn't have too. Julie came out of her room already dressed and Luke appeared, half dressed, "Hey, what was all that knocking about, he moaned, it's too early to get up yet?"

"Billy's had a text from his dad" Jason said.

"Yeah, after all this time! exclaimed Billy. My Dad bought me this phone. The text message beep woke me this morning." He held the phone up where they could all see the message. They gathered around. Luke read the message out loud. "< Billy I'm OK. Send this code – ZZXX5432 – to this phone number – 0456723416 – Dad < "

"I'd send that off straight away Billy, Julie said, your Dads life might depend on it, and it might help Customs to find him." Billy nodded. When 'message sent' appeared on the screen they all relaxed.

"I wonder why he sent the message to Billy, Luke mused. Why he didn't send it direct to the phone number himself?"

Jason had thought about that. "It could be that he only had time for a quick text, but he had two things to do – to let Billy know he was OK and send the code to the Customs Department. If he had sent the code direct He would not have been able to contact Billy. Doing it this way he contacts Billy and Billy sends the code to the Customs people."

Five hours later a tall man in a suit knocked on the front door of the house. He held up an ID wallet when Billy's Aunt opened the door. "Hullo, I'm from Government Customs. I'm wanting to find the owner of a mobile phone with this number. He had taken a notebook out of his pocket and he held it open for Billy's Aunt to see. She leaned forward for a closer look. "I think that's the number of Billy's phone".

“Billy?”

“Billy Jackson, he is staying with us.”

“Is he the son of Tom Jackson the Customs Agent?”

“Yes, that’s correct.”

The man smiled, “Ah, that answers some questions for me. Can I talk to Billy please?”

She stepped back from the door. “Yes, please come in. I’ll show you to the lounge. I’ll send Billy a text. He’s on the beach with some friends.”

Luke, Jason and Julie followed Billy into the lounge room. When the visitor said, “Hullo Billy, I’m Bob Collins. I’m an investigations officer like your Dad, with the Customs Department, the three realised this was a private conversation and turned to leave. He held up a hand. “It’s OK, you can all stay if you agree to not speak a word of what we talk about to anybody. I have to include you in that also Billy.”

Billy and Jason said, “OK”. The others nodded.

He continued, “The code your Dad sent is an emergency code. It means he has been caught by the smugglers he was tracking and is imprisoned by them somewhere. It looks as if your Dad got access to a phone and had time only for a quick text. He probably deleted it after it was sent.”

“Will his text make it easier for you to find him?” Billy asked.

“Unfortunately, it doesn’t help us much Billy. I was able to trace your phone quite easily from the text you sent. These criminals use a couple of ways to make it almost impossible to trace their phones. They buy a cheap phone, use it a few times then destroy it and buy another cheap phone. The other thing they do is keep their phones in heavy steel boxes or safes when not using them. That blocks the phones signal, and it can’t be traced.”

It wasn’t the answer Billy wanted to hear. He was disappointed. He had put his hope in the code being the key to finding his Dad. Oh well, at least he knew his Dad was OK.



THE NEXT MORNING THE four were in the Range Rover on the way to the town centre ten miles away. Billy’s Uncle had an appointment and had invited them to come along. They would have the chance to do some sightseeing and wander around the shops for two hours.

The thing with looking around in a group is that each person has different interests. Julie was keen to spend all the time in the book shop, Luke saw some hoverboards on display and wanted a closer look. He was hoping to get one in

the future. Jason would have spent all afternoon in the modelling kit shop and Billy wanted to see every animal and creature in the Pet store. Eventually they all accepted the time allowed only for a quick look at everything.

The four of them wandered past an alleyway between two buildings. Luke glanced down the alley. He stopped – and stared. After a few seconds he called out, “Jason, I’m going down here to have a look at something.” Before Jason could reply he hurried off along the alley.

When the others noticed Luke was missing and Jason had told them what he’d said, they all set out along the alley. At its far end, the alley came out onto a wide road with a lot of traffic. They spied Luke on the other side of the road looking up at a high brick wall. Crossing at the nearest Zebra crossing, they made their way along to Luke. He waited for them all to arrive then announced, “this is the wall I saw in my dream.”

“Are you sure dude?” Jason said.

“Yep, very sure.” He took six steps backwards then motioned to Billy. “Billy will you come and stand near the corner of the wall. That’s it – a bit more to the right – bit more – stop there. This is exactly what I saw in my dream. Billy standing near a high brick wall, and I can just see the roof of the house inside, over the wall.”

“Billy’s safe, Julie said, so this has to be something to do with his Dad.”

“Yeah, I agree” said Luke. He pulled out his phone to look at the time. “We have to be back at the car park in 15 minutes. We need a way to get here tomorrow.”

Billy spoke up, “There’s a bus that passes our place,”

“Great, said Luke, we’ll ask your Aunt and Uncle if we can catch the bus here tomorrow. Then we’ll have a good look around.”

Permission was granted if they stayed together, were not late back, and made contact by text or phone call if any problems arose. The bus picked them up at 9am the next morning. It’s not as hard to get up early if you know God has put you on the trail of a missing person. Fifteen minutes walking from the Bus Station got them to the walled property and they were soon standing at the same spot they had left the day before.

“We want to get a look inside if we can somehow,” Luke said. “Let’s walk right around the property and see what we find.”

Climbing the wall without help was out of the question. Jason’s opinion was, “even the human fly himself couldn’t climb that wall.” It was your typical brick wall, smooth with no hand or foot holds. At just over three meters high it was a long way up.

Their location was the left front corner of the wall. It took a trek of almost the entire length of the wall before they laid eyes on the answer to their problem, half-way up the far side. A big tree growing close to the wall and well over the height of the wall. Some of its branches extended over the wall and into the property.

“That’s what we’re looking for,” said Luke. “Be careful when you climb and be ready to duck down if anybody comes outside.” Everybody managed to get a position in the tree where they could see into the property. Three cars were parked in front of the house – two smaller cars and a large black Mercedes Benz. A concrete path went around most of the house. The grounds were well groomed lawn with many small trees and bushes growing close to the wall right around. The front gates matched the height of the wall and a security camera looked down menacingly from the top of each gate post.

“It looks like the gate and the cameras are operated remotely from inside the house,” said Jason. “There doesn’t seem to be a way to open them manually. Those cameras will track everything that goes in and out.”

“Look out! everybody down! Julie barked in a loud whisper, someone’s coming.” They all ducked their heads below the level of the top of the wall. Two men walked around from the back of the house on the concrete path. They were in serious conversation and not looking around. They came to the front door and went inside. Jason climbed higher in the tree for a better view. The branch he wriggled out on had a lot of foliage and it would have been difficult to see him from the ground. He was joking around. “Hah! only the Super-Heroes go higher and further than all others!”

His commentary was cut off by a sound like a whip crack. The branch had broken. The others looked up in time to see the branch break clean off – drop with the Super-Hero still clinging to it – hit the top of the wall - bounce inside - and plunge into the ground with a heavy thud.



JASON DIDN'T HAVE TIME to think or make a sound. He lay on his back looking up at the sky, his mind trying to catch up on what had happened. Luke's anxious face appeared over the wall. “Jason! are you hurt!!?”

“I’ve scraped the skin off my elbow.” He lifted a hand and pressed his shoulder – yowch!! “And my shoulder hurts.” With a groan he rolled over and crawled on his hands and knees out of sight behind some shrubs and small trees near the foot of the wall, then flopped on the ground again.

“We’ll need a ladder to get you out of there, Luke said, and a big one too.”



After a short time, Jason called up, "Luke."

"Yeah"?

"Now that I'm in here I may as well have a look around. I'm going to move along behind these trees and bushes and see what I can see. Ask Billy what his Dad was wearing when he left home, in case I see him."

A moment later Luke's head appeared over the wall again. "Billy says his Dad had on a black leather jacket, a green check shirt and blue jeans."

"OK," Jason said. "While you guys are working out a plan to get me out, I'll have a look around. Don't leave until I get back."

"Alright, Luke replied, be careful."

Jason thought about Charlie Chans advice to detectives they had found on the internet. It had helped them find the vanished Vienna vase. A detective must always be curious and notice the unusual. He also said a detective must have a way out before he goes in. It was too late for that one.

It depended on how thick the bushes and trees were. Sometimes he had to crawl on his hands and knees. Other times he could move along in a crouch. His elbow was stinging, and his shoulder felt like somebody kept hitting it with a hammer. Doing his best to turn his mind away from the pain, he got around too where he could see the back of the house. That wall had only a couple of small windows for what must have been a toilet and bathroom.

Then he noticed half a window with steel bars poking up at ground level. 'Must be a window for the basement,' he thought. Getting to that window meant crossing the lawn in the open. He figured he'd make it because of the lack of windows in that part of the house. Crouching low, he ran across to the barred window. It was dark inside with only a few stray rays of sunlight crossing the floor. As his eyes adjusted to the dark he saw a man sitting on a bed – and – yes! he was wearing a green check shirt and blue jeans. One of the rays of sunlight touched on a black leather jacket hanging on a hook on the door. Billy's Dad!!

Jason reached down and tapped on the window. The man looked up at the sound. He stood and moved quickly to the window. He lifted the latch and pushed the window. It cracked open an inch and a half.

"Are you Mr Jackson" Jason whispered?

"Yes, I am," the man replied.

"What's your son's name" Jason asked?

"Billy," replied the man.

"OK, Jason said, sorry, just making sure." He reached around to get his phone. He hadn't thought of the phone until now. Had it been damaged in his fall? If it had he would have to go back and get Luke's phone, then come all the way back again. That would quadruple his chances of being seen. He pulled it

out of his back pocket and gave it a quick inspection. Happy days! It seemed to be OK.

“I can’t wait around,” he whispered. “Here’s my phone.” He poked it through the narrow opening of the window. Then he took off again in a running crouch back to the bushes and trees near the wall. He worked his way back to the spot where he had fallen and called Luke. Luke’s head appeared over the wall. “I found Billy’s Dad - I gave him my phone. I’ve got to get out of here. What’s the plan?”

Luke looked bewildered. “We can’t think of one. The ladder idea is no good. It will most likely be too heavy for us to carry even if we find one, and we would never get it over the wall. The best we’ve come up with is to find a long rope, tie it around the tree and drop it down to you to climb with.”

“Even if I had nothing wrong with me I don’t think I could climb that high without any foot holds Luke. Not a chance with my shoulder like it is.”

‘And added to that, Luke thought, we’re not supposed to be home late’!

Unexpectedly, Julie’s eager face appeared over the top of the wall. “Jason, Luke, a bakery delivery truck just pulled up at the gate. If Jason can get in the back while the driver is inside the house, he can get out that way”.

“Yess!! good thinking Julie.” Luke looked down, “what do you think Jason?”

“It might work, said Jason. It’s all I’ve got. I’ll have to try. If you see me get in, you guys will have to stop the truck outside the gate and get the driver to let me out.”

“Ok,” said Luke.

Jason was in his crouching run again. He got to the house and stood up flat against the side wall at the corner. He peeked around the corner in time to see the truck stop at the front door. The driver came around, opened the back door and climbed in. In a moment he appeared again with a large tray full of bakery goods. He stepped down off the truck and – yes - he pushed the door shut with his elbow and walked to the front door.

Jason had two large windows to pass to get to the truck. He judged they were high enough up on the wall that if he dropped to his hands and knees he would make it past without being seen. He made it past the first window, then the next. His elbow and shoulder reminded him again that they needed some attention. There was no time to dwell on it. He stood up and hurried to the truck, climbed in and squeezed himself between two sets of shelves.

The driver came out whistling, opened the door, reached in and put the empty tray on a shelf near the door. Then he shut the door and Jason heard him pull the lever down to lock it. He was in complete darkness. Jason felt the truck

move off, then a moment later stop at the gate. Again, he felt it move through the gate. He was out!!

‘If the others can’t stop the truck, he thought, I’m in for a free ride all over town delivering bread.’

Before the driver had time to pull out into the road, he had the surprise of his life when three kids jumped out in front of his truck waving their hands and signalling for him to stop. Luke ran around to the driver’s window. “Excuse me Sir, our friend is in the back of your truck. He fell off the wall and couldn’t get out. He climbed in the back of your truck while you were inside.”

The driver studied Luke. ‘Were these kids joking with him or what?’ He climbed out. “You kids stay here, he said, I’ll go and have a look.” He opened the back door and there was Jason.

“Thanks Mister,” he said as he climbed out. “I couldn’t get back over the wall.”

“It’s a real fortress isn’t it?” the driver said.

“Yeah, Jason replied, those cameras watch everything that goes in and out”

The driver pointed at the right-hand gatepost. “One of them is watching you now.”

“What?” said Jason looking up. The camera on that post had swung around and tipped to be pointing directly at Jason. It was an effort to keep his voice calm. “Oh right. Anyway, thanks for your help,” he said.

The driver shook his hand. “No problem, glad to be of help.” He went back and climbed into the cab and after waving at the others he drove off.

Billy, Julie and Luke were still celebrating the great escape when Jason walked up to them. Their faces fell when he said, “they swung the camera around and saw me getting out of the truck. That means they know I was inside the wall. We had better get to the bus station fast!”

The four ran up to the Zebra crossing and hurried over. They ran for a while, then walked fast and when they had their breathe back they ran again.

Exactly five minutes after they left, the gates opened again. Like a great black panther, the black Mercedes Benz rolled through and moved out into the traffic.

The next scheduled bus had not left when the four arrived. They scrambled on, showing the driver their all-day tickets. The bus was three quarters full. They collapsed into vacant seats.

“We made it. They won’t find us now,” Jason said jubilantly.

Luke had been staring out the window. “I’m not so sure Jason. Don’t make it obvious – have a look - isn’t that the big Mercedes Benz we saw parked in front of the house?”

“What?” Jason jolted upright. He slid down again in his seat and peeked over the bottom of the window. An icy feeling ran down his spine. “Yeah, I think it is. They seem to be watching this bus. They must have seen us get on the bus. We’ll know for sure if they follow the bus when it takes off.”

Billy and Julie were alarmed to get the thunderbolt about the black car.

Four sets of eyes were on the Car as the bus pulled out of its bay. The big black car moved off behind it.

“What do you think they want?” asked Julie, I mean what will they do if they catch us?”

“I’d say it’s to find out how much we know,” Luke said. “Could be to find where we live.”

“Jason frowned. “We might end up with Billy’s Dad if they catch us. Anyway whatever they want, I know what I want. That’s to put as much fresh air between me and those guys as possible.”

“Yeah, said Billy, but how are we going to do that?”

Nobody said anything. They needed another great escape. Julie came up with the answer again, “I know what we can do. I read about this in one of my mystery books. We wait for a stop where a lot of people are getting off. Then we mix with them, get off with them, and look like we’re with their group. We can ring Billy’s Uncle to come and pick us up.”

“You are definitely our ideas person Julie,” Jason said. “I reckon it will be even better if two of us get off at one stop and two at another. That will make it harder for them to figure out if it’s us or not. I’m the only one they’ve seen up close, through the camera. That will make it easier for you guys to get away. Julie, how about you and Billy get off first. Luke and I will join the next big group. You’ve got Billy’s phone and we have Luke’s.”

“We’ll have to be quick though, Luke said, no wondering whether the group getting off is big enough. Just decide quickly and go. We don’t want to end up being the last passengers on the bus. When you are off, try to find somewhere to hide or somewhere out of the way. Wait for about an hour then ring Billy’s house. We’ll do the same.”

Four adults and three children gathered at the door as the bus came to the second stop. Julie nodded at Billy and they joined the group and exited at that stop. Luke and Jason turned and watched the black car through the back window. When the bus moved off the black car followed. Billy and Julie were safe.

“What say we split up as soon as we get off, Jason said. That will make it difficult for them.”

“Yeah, but they will probably go after you, Luke said, I should stay with you. And you have no phone.”

“They’ll be after me anyway”, Jason said. “It will be easier for them to follow two of us. I’ll probably have a better chance on my own. After an hour I’ll come back to the bus stop and wait for you guys to pick me up.” Luke could see the sense in that and reluctantly agreed. When they exited with the next large group, Luke went left and Jason right. The car did not vary an inch, it kept moving in Jason’s direction. As the group broke up Jason came to a walking path between houses through to the next street. He swerved into it and ran along it. The Mercedes would have to go further down and turn. It gave him some time to get ahead of them. With a sinking feeling he realised hiding places are few and far between in your average suburban street.

One thing was in his favour, it was rubbish day. The streets were lined with recently emptied tall green plastic bins waiting for home owners to arrive from work and take them in. It was really his only choice. ‘It’ll take them all day to look in every bin,’ he thought. The front of the Mercedes appeared like a black bloodhound at the end of the street. It was no time for indecision. He did a quick inspection to find a bin that looked clean enough that he wouldn’t end up throwing up from the smell. He quickly pulled it over to a small stone wall close by. By standing on the wall he was able to get a leg over the rim, then the other, and drop in. He grabbed the lid and pulled it closed over himself. His shoulder and elbow did not take kindly to all that exertion. It was five minutes before they settled back down to being just plain sore.

He sat in lonely silence for a time. He didn’t hear the car pull up, but two car doors slamming told him the men had got out to search. Then silence again. The atmosphere in the bin was mouldy and musty, and it had a pungent sour smell. The bin stopped him hearing anything but the loudest noises, which was nerve racking. He was expecting at anytime for the lid to be lifted and a burly arm reach in and grab him by the collar.

After a while he noticed a word was in his mind – pray. ‘Why didn’t I think of that before now’, he thought.’ “Lord, stop them from looking in this bin. Thank you, in Jesus name, amen.” More time went by.

His mouth went dry and a nervous tremor passed right through him at the sound of a rough voice. “That kid is hiding around here somewhere”. The man seemed to be standing right beside Jason’s bin. Farther away he heard another voice answer, “yeah, but we can’t keep looking for ever. We need to get back to the house to make sure things are right there.” Silence. Two car doors slammed again.

About to open the lid and jump out, Jason had a sudden thought. He remembered the old trick for catching someone hiding. You search for a while then say in loud voice, “we’ve run out of time, we have to go.” Then you

withdraw and wait. The person hiding comes out and is caught. What if the car was waiting just down the road and they were watching. Gloomily, he decided to stick it out in the bin a while longer.

Jason was in the middle of trying to decide if he had waited long enough, when tapping on the lid made him jump. A familiar voice said, “Jason, you can come out, they’re gone.” Luke!!

Luke was grinning. Jason gave him a weak smile and stood and filled his lungs with beautiful fresh clean air. Luke stopped his celebrations when he saw Jason was struggling to get out of the bin. The shoulder ached, the elbow stung, he couldn’t feel his legs, every joint seemed to be stiff, and gurgling in his stomach and dry mouth told him his body was desperate for food and drink.

With Luke’s assistance he was eventually standing on solid ground. He took a second to say a silent thanks for the answer to his prayer. Slapping his legs and walking up and down on the spot for a while bought them back to life. “You didn’t make the call?” he asked.

No, Luke said. I figured I would be of more use to you by following the car at a distance. They were focusing on you and I stayed well back. I memorised the number plate and a description of those two guys. If they had caught you I would have called the Police and given them those details. I’ll call Billy’s house now.”

“Jason reached out and put his hand on Luke’s arm. “Before you do, I need to ask you a serious question.”

“Yeah sure,” said Luke, feeling a little uneasy about what might be coming.

“Did you see a McDonalds around here anywhere?”

They both burst out laughing.

Sad but true – not a McDonalds nor a Hungry Jacks, not even a shop of any sort could be seen between the boys and the horizon. Luke made the call and it was not long before the Range Rover appeared full of smiling faces.



JULIE WRINKLED HER nose. Where was that smell coming from? The looks on the others faces said they were noticing it to. Jason had picked a cleaner bin, but it was still a rubbish bin. Some of its ‘perfume’ had transferred itself to him and his clothes. Luke noticed their reaction and explained. Though they knew the reason for the smell, Jason noticed everybody was quick to get out of the car when they got to the house. He got the message and headed straight for the shower and a change of clothes. That wasn’t without pain either. The water stung

his elbow something fierce. It did feel good on his aches and stiffness. It had to be done to guard against infection as well.

Billy's aunt had produced a large glass of Coca Cola when Jason asked for a drink and the four chocolate biscuits that came with it were the best Jason had ever tasted. A Doctor came, and Jason came out with his shoulder taped and the arm in a sling to help the shoulder heal, and thick bandaging to the other elbow. The doctor predicted a full recovery within two weeks. Billy's Aunt prepared a roast dinner with bread rolls and butter. Several large bottles of Coca Cola were on the table with glasses for everyone. Dessert was apple pie. A large Chocolate cake came next in case anybody was still hungry. Each of them found room for one piece.

Billy's uncle phoned Bob Collins, the Customs agent who had visited them, and told something of Jason, Luke, Julie and Billy's experience. The agent arranged to come the next morning. He didn't make it. Instead Billy was overjoyed to get a call from his Dad. He was free but in Hospital. Billy returned from the trip to the Hospital with the full story. His Dad had been hurt when the smugglers caught him and had not received any medical attention. In the five weeks he had been in the basement they had given him only meagre amounts of food. When the Gang saw Jason had been inside the grounds they searched their prisoner and his room thoroughly but found nothing. There seemed to be no reason for alarm.

The Customs agent had tied a shoelace around Jason's phone and dropped it just outside the window with the lace within reach to pull the phone back in. That night He messaged the Customs Department, giving his location and the code again.

Before dawn the next morning a - choppa – choppa – choppa - sound echoed over the wall and a Blackhawk helicopter came out of the sky and settled on the grass in front of the house. Ten, Armed Offenders Squad Policemen clambered out and knocked on the front door – with their steel battering ram. The crooks were sleeping and taken completely by surprise. Billy's Dad was free within a few minutes. The house was full of illegal contraband goods. Enough evidence to put the gang behind another wall for a long time.



BILLY STARTED THE CONVERSATION. "I've been thinking about those dreams." He and Jason were sitting on the sand. Julie and Luke were in swimming. Jason was banned from swimming until the bandages came off. He



had the binoculars. He'd been checking for those Chinese Submarines. Billy went on. "God knew all about me and Dad and we knew nothing about Him."

"Yeah, Jason replied, two interesting things about God, He knows our past, present and future, and He is everywhere. Anywhere you go God is there."

"I'd like to know God the way you guys know Him," Billy said.

"That's easy, Jason replied, all you have to do is ask Jesus into your life. He died for our sins so that we can have a friendship with Himself and God the Father and the Holy Spirit. You don't even need to understand all that at first. You just need to say a prayer and ask Jesus into your heart. Would you like to do that now?"

Billy's mouth dropped open, "You mean right here at the beach? I thought you had to be in a Church to pray?"

"No, Jason said, Churches are places where Christians get together in friendship, study the Bible and sing to God. God made the world, you can talk to Him anywhere anytime.

"OK, Billy said, I'd like to do that."

"One way we can do it is for me to say the prayer and you can repeat what I say - talking to God. Or you can just do it yourself."

"I'll follow you," Billy said.

"OK." "Jesus thank you for being my Saviour." Billy said it. I ask you to come into my heart and help me to know you more each day." Billy said it.

"Thank you." Billy said it.

"Done," Jason said." "God promises He will come into the heart of anyone who asks like that. Even the greatest people in the world, like the President of the United States, have to pray a prayer like that if they want to know God."

"Dad's been asking me a lot of questions, Billy said, like how I met you and how we knew where he was. Now I can tell him about this as well."

Julie, Jason and Luke had a few more days left with Billy. Plenty of time for an ordinary holiday, where you slept in and got up whenever.



THE END